

these years for our State, for the children, for the country, for the environment, for the Constitution, for all the things he fought for, made him believe he could cast unpopular votes, like the Panama Canal vote, and still come home and tell the people why he did it and have them stick with him.

I think there are three things: He never forgot the lessons of the past, beginning with the Constitution of the United States; he never stopped dreaming of the future; and he never lost his essential humanity. Our public life is poorer when people forget the past and ignore the future. It is poorer when they choose power over purpose because they forget we're just here for a little speck of time, and in 100 or 200 years nobody will remember any of us, and all that will endure is whatever contribution we made to make life better and richer and more decent.

I've watched Dale Bumpers in a way that the whole world got to watch him when he spoke in the Senate. But when you strip it all away, it comes down to that, to humility, humanity, a sense of one's own mortality and one's own capacity for incredible dignity and glory. He has represented all that.

So if a child asks you if he or she should ever go into public life in this country, you should say yes. But don't ever forget the lessons from the past and how smart the people were that started this country. Don't ever stop dreaming about a better future. And do not ever lose your essential humanity. And all the complexities of all the problems I face and all the battles

I see come before me, 90 percent of them would go away tomorrow if people could just understand they do not have to define their lives in terms of putting someone else down, defeating someone else, thinking they're better than someone else, ignoring their common humanity.

I was looking at Dale and David tonight, and I was thinking, it seems like yesterday I first saw David Pryor running for Congress in 1976. It seems like yesterday I was first excited about Dale Bumpers coming out of Charleston in 1970. It seems like yesterday when we were all young and beginning and everything was new. And it passes in the flash of an eye. And when it's over, what remains is the feeling that you have been human and alive to the needs and aspirations of other people. There is nobody in public life in this country today who embodies it better than Dale Bumpers, and I am honored and proud to have served with him.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at the Statehouse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rabbi Eugene Levy, Temple B'nai Israel, who offered the benediction; Bishop L.T. Walker, Church of God in Christ, who offered the invocation; Vaughn McQuary, Arkansas State Democratic Party chair; Carroll Willis, director, community services division, Democratic National Committee; Kris Engskov, the President's Aide; and former Senator David H. Pryor.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and an Exchange With Reporters

March 15, 1999

President Clinton. Let me just say that I'm delighted to have Secretary General Solana here. I think he has done a superb job in leading NATO. We are very much looking forward, in just a little over a month, to celebrating the 50th anniversary of NATO by admitting new members. The documents were issued over the weekend. The Secretary of State went to Missouri with the representatives of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, and we're very pleased. I'm looking forward to the meeting and

looking forward to NATO's missions in the 21st century.

Let me say I'm also very, very pleased by the news we received this morning that the Kosovar Albanians have agreed to sign the peace agreement. And I want to thank Mr. Solana and Secretary Albright and all the others who have worked on this so hard. And again, I would encourage Mr. Milosevic to agree to the terms, as well, so that we can avoid further conflict and bloodshed.

Kosovo

Q. Do you think they will—the Serbs will go along with it?

President Clinton. I don't know. I hope they will. And I think it is clearly the right thing to do. From his point of view, I think it's the best chance to preserve the integrity of Serbia and avoid economic and other adversity. So I would hope that he would do that.

Q. Mr. President, is it a certainty that NATO will strike if he doesn't sign? Is that for sure?

Q. Well, do you have anything to talk him into it?

President Clinton. One at a time. Wait. Wait.

Q. Is it a certainty that NATO will strike the Serbs if Milosevic does not sign?

President Clinton. Well, all I can tell you is I think we have a clear statement out there about what our policy is. And if he shows intransigence and aggression, I think from our point of view we would have little option. You might want to ask Mr. Solana what he thinks about that.

Q. Do you agree with that, Mr. Secretary General?

Secretary General Solana. I agree. Yes, yes. As just said, the President—I do agree, yes.

Q. Mr. President, how long are you prepared to let these talks in France go on?

President Clinton. Well, I think they ought to be able to talk this through a little bit. I don't know that anyone was absolutely sure the Kosovar Albanians would sign this morning. And peace is better than war. But obviously, they can't go on indefinitely. We need to give everybody time to assess the current situation and where they're going to go from here.

But again, I think the most important thing now is that Mr. Milosevic and the Serbs agree to sign. And it's clearly the right thing to do.

Q. Mr. President, in the past, NATO has only been willing to act in the wake of extreme atrocities. Why is it credible to threaten the use

of military force in this situation if that doesn't take place?

President Clinton. What would your answer be?

Secretary General Solana. My answer is that if an agreement is not reached—if President Milosevic doesn't sign, the risk of a catastrophe will be very likely. And we have to prevent that from happening. And NATO will prevent that from happening.

President Clinton. Let me say, in sort of support of the other NATO allies as well, the reason we—you're absolutely right, there's not a lot of precedent for what we're trying to do here. But the reason that we worked so hard—that Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, the rest of us—the reason we worked so hard to get NATO to take this position is to avoid the level of atrocity and death that we saw in Bosnia. We didn't want to go down that road again. We wanted to try to dramatically shorten the timetable from aggression and the loss of innocent life and upheaval to action.

And so far I would say that it seems to have been a successful policy, in the sense that we at least have one side now signing on to this peace agreement. We just have to stay with it. We have to be firm about this.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you, pool.

Q. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Q. Going to hold a news conference soon, right?

President Clinton. Good morning. That's what—I think so. I just miss you so terribly and not having any questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Interview With Michael Jackson of KRLA Radio March 15, 1999

Mr. Jackson. Forgive me. There we had the Deputy Director of the Office of Management

and the Budget with us, Sylvia Mathews. We are supposed to be at the end of the show,